

News Release

For Immediate Release

USDA Farm Service Agency
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FSA Hosts Public Meeting on Managed Haying and Grazing on CRP

Bozeman, MT – Please be reminded, the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) will host a public meeting beginning at 1:00 p.m. on March 20, 2008 at the Hampton Inn in Great Falls. The purpose of the meeting is to provide the general public the opportunity to comment on changes to managed haying and grazing on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land.

The proposed changes include allowable frequencies of managed haying and grazing and changes to primary nesting season dates, during which managed haying and grazing is not permitted. The proposed changes, if adopted, would apply to those lands enrolled in CRP after September 25, 2006 and existing CRP contracts where managed haying and grazing was not authorized prior to that date. For such lands in Montana, current managed haying and grazing frequencies are once in ten years for managed haying and once in five years for managed grazing. The primary nesting season is from May 15 – August 1. Montana's FSA State Committee determined that changes to the current program provisions were warranted. The proposed changes are to allow managed haying once in five years and managed grazing once in three years. The proposed primary nesting season dates are May 15 – July 15. The public now has the opportunity to comment on whether the proposed changes would be beneficial to wildlife and wildlife habitats on CRP acres in Montana.

Comments received will be considered for a state-specific environmental assessment that will evaluate these effects of the proposed changes in Montana. The environmental assessment will be made available to the public for comment before any decisions are finalized pertaining to managed haying and grazing. If you are unable to attend the public meeting, comments can be submitted both electronically and by regular mail. They must be received by the close of business on **April 19, 2008**. Direct comments to: MHG EAs, Geo-Marine Incorporated, 2713 Magruder Blvd., Suite D, Hampton, Va. 23666-1572 or send them to this Web site: <http://public.geo-marine.com>.

FSA will host the meeting at 1:00 p.m. March 20, 2008 at the Hampton Inn, 2301 14th Street SW, Great Falls, MT. The phone number for the hotel is 406/453-2675. When contacting the hotel regarding the meeting, please refer to the Farm Service Agency.

More information on the environmental assessments for the managed haying and grazing provisions may be found on the project Web site: <http://public.geo-marine.com> or on the Montana FSA website: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt>.